of Indian Airlines had recommended that the modernisation of Indian Airlines Jet fleet should be accorded a higher priority.

A Techno Economic evaluation study, to replace the ageing fleet of B-737 and A-300 aircraft and also to augment fleet capacity of Indian Airlines, is currently underway.

New Airports in Bihar

†3126. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to construct the new airports in Bihar;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No new focal point of traffic has emerged with sufficient viability, and no airline operator has requested for starting services from any place which does not have airport.

Loss making small Airports

3127. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in 16th July, Calcutta edition of Times of India with the caption "Privatisation fear to hit AAI staff, warn panel";

(b) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to lease out Airports of Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and Chennai; and

(c) if so, who will bear the running of loss making small Airports?

---

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) It is planned that Airports Authority of India (AAI) will receive income from leasing of airports at Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and Chennai. This income will also be available to AAI for running of loss making airports.

Non-availability of Telephone on Demand

†3128. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what is Government's response towards the news-item published under the caption "Fir bhi telephone mang per uplabdh nahin ho sakega" in the Dainik Jagran, dated the 4th July, 2000;

(b) whether Government have formulated any such scheme under which the said problem may be solved;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (d) the total demand for new telephone connections in the country as envisaged in the Ninth Plan Period was 237 lakh telephones. Out of these 237 lakh new telephones it was envisaged that the DTS (the then DoT) and MTNL will provide 185 lakh telephones and balance 52 lakh to be provided by private sector.

During Mid Term Appraisal of Ninth Plan, it was observed that provision of telephones by private sector was slow and lagging behind. As such it was decided to increase the target of DTS + MTNL to 222.7 lakh and balance by private sector.

During the first three years of the Ninth Year Plan i.e. from 1.4.97 to 31.3.2000, 119.68 lakh new telephone connections have already

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.